

Members of the committee, my name is Ben Waxman and along with my wife Whitney Reynolds Waxman, we are the founders and owners of American Roots, a 100% American Made and Union Made clothing company located in Westbrook Maine. We are the only clothing company in the United States that we know of that makes every single garment with 100% US sourced material and has it designed and constructed in our 100% Unionized factory located right here in the great state of Maine. We pay good wages, provide good benefits and a healthy and safe work environment for all of our workers.

We have experienced significant growth in just four years, growing from 4 employees in a 900 square foot facility to nearly 30 employees in a 20,000 square foot facility. 95% of our business is working with private companies, unions, educational institutions and other entities who want a high quality American Made and Union made product to have their name customized to a garment that they can be proud to wear. 95% percent of our business to date has been a client base outside the state of Maine.

I sit before you today in support of LD 1280. We are known as a state filled with incredibly hard working and innovative people, it is time that those people are able to

compete on a level playing field especially when it comes to the goods and services of the State. Passing LD 1280 is a first step in leveling the playing field for the hard working women and men of Maine who are often competing against a global economy that is unfairly rigged against them. It is unfair, and above all bad economics to not allow Maine business the opportunity to compete on a level playing field with multi national corporations. We need to value the workers who make this state run on a daily basis and give them the opportunity to provide their products and skills to all Mainers.

For too long we have seen the lowest bid be the way to go because of cost. One must realize that while we may be saving pennies on the dollar by awarding out of state or over seas companies with significant contracts there is a human cost and an economic cost to the very Mainers who are paying for it. How can we possibly recruit smart, innovative, hard working Mainers to invest and start businesses right here in Maine if we do not allow for a level playing field against foreign competition or out of state competition where wages are lower and benefits are rare.

LD 1280 is a starting point , and it is our hope that with the passage of this legislation it will be a building block to attract, encourage and grow an even stronger innovative economy here in Maine.